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**CLIFT FAMILY PAPERS**  
**ca. 1820-1968**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Clift Papers, ca. 1820-1968, are photocopies of originals owned by William Clift, Rowland, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. The materials in this finding aid measure .42 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Clift Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Clift Family Papers containing approximately 150 items (269 photocopies), span the years from ca. 1820 to 1968 and are composed of Civil War letters, Bible records, a deed, wills, genealogical data and correspondence, historical and biographical sketches, D.A.R. and Daughters of 1812 applications, and other papers.

Of special interest to the historian are the letters (August 20, 1863 to October 27, 1864) of Colonel William Clift, 7<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Regiment, U.S.A., his second wife, Elizabeth, and other members of the family in Kentucky. Clift's letters, written largely from Knoxville, Knox County, Chattanooga (Hamilton County), and Soddy (Hamilton County), Tennessee, reflect his movement and conditions in Kentucky, his imprisonment in Atlanta, and his activities in east Tennessee, where he carried messages for the Federals through Confederate lines. There are two letters reassuring Mrs. Clift of her husband's safety, one (March 20, 1864) written by Major General George H. Thomas, and another (September 24, 1864) written by a member of his staff. One letter (undated) from Clift's brother-in-law tells of the excitement in Kentucky regarding the Negro question, mentioning that Colonel Frank L. Wolford has denounced the President as a traitor and that Kentucky Governor Thomas E. Bramlett did not reply to the charge. During March and April 1864, Colonel Clift wrote to his wife from Soddy, Tennessee, about the possibility of her joining him, but cautioned her that there were robbers everywhere. Clift's views toward slavery are revealed in his statements that he favored the proposal to emancipate the slaves and to leave them in the states where they "respectively belong and let them do the labor in freedom that they have done in slavery."

The Clift family papers, including a sketch concerning how the Civil War in east Tennessee affected the Clift family, center around Hamilton County, Tennessee, while the McDonald and some of the other families followed the familiar migration pattern from southwest Virginia through east Tennessee, and on to Texas. Other family lines settled in Maryland, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Since the families in this collection are so closely related, the researcher should consult folders for any families into which their lines married.

Included is genealogical information for the Brooks, Brothers, Clift, Doughty, Fowler, Hutcheson, Kearley, McDonald, Rawlings, and Rowland families.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

### Colonel William Clift

- 1794? December 5, born in Greene County, Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio (now Tennessee)
- In childhood Went to Knox County, Tennessee, with his father
- 1823 April 25, married Nancy Brooks (1795-1847), daughter of General Moses Brooks of Knox County; children by this marriage: James Warren, Mary Ann, Joseph, Robert Brooks, America W., Elizabeth Agnes and Moses H.
- 1824-1825 Settled in Hamilton County, Tennessee, and became the first millionaire and one of the largest land owners who ever lived there
- 1828 Helped organize and became a charter member of the Soddy Presbyterian Church, which was first called Mount Bethel Church; was a ruling elder and clerk of the session for 40 years
- 1848-1855 Served as Commissioner of Improvement for the U.S. Government prior to 1861 Commanded the Hamilton County militia for many years; was a magistrate
- 1861 Although he was far past the age for military service, he declared himself for the Union and organized the Seventh Tennessee Federal Regiment, of which he was elected Colonel. This regiment had no Federal authority at first and was considered by some to be a guerrilla regiment. On November 14, 1861, Governor Isham G. Harris issued an order to capture Clift and his men, dead or alive. Two of Clift's sons served with him in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, while two sons and the husbands of his three daughters were in the Confederate Army
- 1861, Nov. Clift's regiment disbanded, with Clift and three of his men voting to stay in the area, 100 of the men seeking to join Federal forces in Kentucky and 200 of the men voting to disperse
- 1862, June Clift recruited men in Morgan, Scott and Anderson counties, Tennessee, for a regiment to be called the 7<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Volunteer Regiment
- 1863 Married Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_

- 1863            October 24, was captured by Confederate troops commanded by his son, Moses H. Clift, while he was attempting to carry dispatches from the Federal commanders in Chattanooga – then in a state of siege – to General Burnside in Knoxville
- 1864            early February, escaped from from prison in Atlanta, Georgia
- 1866            February 27, died in Hamilton County, Tennessee; buried in the Soddy Presbyterian Church Cemetery

References:

1. Armstrong, Zella. The History of Hamilton County and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Vol. I. Chattanooga, Tennessee, The Lookout Publishing Company, 1931.
2. Tennesseans in the Civil War, Part I. Nashville, Tennessee, Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964.
3. Data in the manuscript papers

## CONTAINER LIST

### **Box 1**

1. Aids to the researcher – Notes re the collection, its compiler, and genealogical research
2. Civil War letters – Clift, William, Col., 7<sup>th</sup> Tenn. Regt., U.S.A., 1863-1864, containing letters from family and from Major General George H. Thomas
3. Genealogical Data – Brooks family
4. Genealogical Data – Brothers family
5. Genealogical Data – Clift family
6. Genealogical Data – Doughty family
7. Genealogical Data – Fowler family
8. Genealogical Data – Hutcheson family
9. Genealogical Data – Kearley family
10. Genealogical Data – McDonald family
11. Genealogical Data – Rawlings family
12. Genealogical Data – Rowland family
13. Genealogical Data – Rowland family
14. Sketches—Biographical – Rowland, Martha Cheatham (Fowler), 1852-1935
15. Sketches – General – The Civil War in Eastern Tennessee and How It Affected the Clift Family of Hamilton County